

Lesson Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Lesson ID: 80367-00141

Title: SUMMARY - OPERATION SHARP EDGE

Operation/Exercise Name: SHARP EDGE

Observed: 05 Aug 1990

Originator: BLT 2/4

POC: Commercial: DSN:

5. (U) GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

a. (U) Sharp Edge - 90 was a National Command Authority directed Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) and reinforcement of the American Embassy, Monrovia, Liberia.

b. (U) Starting on 20 May 90, Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/4, conducted daily intelligence briefs to all BLT staff and tactical commanders.

c. (U) Conducted an emergency backload from Camp de Canjuers (CDC), France to Toulon, France within 12 hours.

d. (U) Exercised Rapid Response Planning of BLT staff and Company Commanders.

e. (U) Organized Battery "I" as a provisional rifle company, a platoon from Headquarters and Service Company as a provisional rifle platoon, the LAI platoon as a foot mobile, provisional rifle platoon, and Weapons Company as a provisional rifle company.

f. (U) Provided the BLT Executive Officer to the 22d MEU Forward Command Element as the ground tactical adviser.

g. (U) On a regularly scheduled basis, the BLT conducted rehearsals of each day and night option.

h. (U) Conducted detailed Rules of Engagement briefs to officers and junior Marines.

i. (U) Conducted live fire training of all weapon systems to enhance combat readiness.

j. (U) Crossdecked BLT Advance Force of a provisional rifle platoon (Rein) onto USS PETERSON.

k. (U) Conducted joint planning with Royal Marines from 40 Royal Commando, Great Britain.

l. (U) Reinforcement of American Embassy.

m. (U) Evacuated 1648 American citizens (AmCits) and foreign nationals from the American Embassy, Receiver and Transmitter Sites of the Area Telecommunications Office (ATO) and the Port of Buchanan.

n. (U) Conducted replenishment of American Embassy (food, fuel and water) in coordination with 22d MEU.

o. (U) Drawdown/relief in place of American Embassy reinforcement.

p. (U) Turnover to Landing Force Sixth Fleet (LF6F) 3-90.

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6. (U) DATES:

a. (U) Backload: 24 - 25 May 90.

b. (U) Depart Toulon, France: 27 May 90.

c. (U) Crossdeck of Advance Force to USS PETERSON: 29 May - 2 Jun 90.

d. (U) Arrival off the coast of Liberia ("Mamba Station"), West Africa, 3 Jun 90.

e. (U) Evacuation of 1530 American Citizens and foreign nationals from the American Embassy, 5 - 21 Aug 90.

f. (U) Evacuation of 20 American Citizens, from the ATO sites 5 Aug 90.

g. (U) American Embassy reinforcement: 5 - 21 Aug 90.

h. (U) Evacuation of 97 American citizens and foreign nationals from the Port of Buchanan: 13 Aug 90.

i. (U) Replenishment of American Embassy (food, fuel and water): 5 - 21 Aug 90.

j. (U) Drawdown/relief in place of American Embassy reinforcement: 13 Aug 90.

k. (U) Turnover on station to LF6F 3-90: 21 Aug 90.

7. (U) LOCATION OF OPERATIONS:

Monrovia, Liberia, West
Africa (GEO 05 19N 010 48W).

8. (U) LOCATION OF PERSONNEL:

USS SAIPAN, USS PONCE, USS
SUMTER

9. (U) OBJECTIVES:

a. (U) To conduct a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation
(NEO) under both permissive and nonpermissive conditions.

b. (U) To quickly reinforce the American Embassy.

c. (U) Adequately resupply the American Embassy with
food, fuel and water.

10. (U) LIMITATIONS:

To conduct all required missions while
maintaining a neutral posture to all warring factions.

11. (U) MAJOR PARTICIPANTS:

22d MEU, Amphibious Squadron Four.

12. (U) COMMANDERS COMMENTS:

a. (U) The MEU(SOC) concept, particularly when related
to predeployment workups and early integration of all
components of the Mediterranean Amphibious Readiness Group
(MARG), was validated in all respects. Rapid response planning,
close and continuous planning, integration of all staffs,
realistic training scenarios, evaluated exercises and etc. all
combined to ensure the conduct and execution of a successful
contingency.

b. (U) All BLT staff members received a greater
appreciation for the rapid response planning sequence.

c. (U) The Marine Corps as an entity must continue close
and continuous coordination with the Department of State to

ensure policies, plans, doctrines, and SOP's incorporate the capabilities of each to ensure both parties understands the other.

d. (U) Dissemination of intelligence information from the various intelligence sources was a major problem in the planning for Sharp Edge. A single collection/analysis agency would have helped solve this problem.

e. (U) Getting all Navy departments involved with rehearsals was never accomplished until the actual execution because of administrative and peace time restrictions.

f. (U) Realistic NEO training ensured all concerned were aware of and understood the importance of restricted ROE's and the use of minimal force. This was particularly highlighted as the NEO was strung out over a two week period, and particularly when NPFL placed severe restrictions on the evacuation force at the Port of Buchanan.

g. (U) In unknown tactical situations, and in some permissive environments, it is more prudent to quickly screen evacuees ashore and conduct detailed screening and processing afloat in a more controlled benign environment. Too much emphasis is put on conducting full blown NEO's ashore with Evacuation Control teams etc. during MEU(SOC) training.

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